



June 2002



SCHOOL FINANCE UPDATE

A Monthly Newsletter Published by the School Budgeting and Accounting Division

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Linda McCulloch, State Superintendent

FY03 Flexibility Funding Cut

The Governor's Budget Office confirmed the state will reduce the "Flex Fund" account by \$184,000 for FY 03. This results in approximately a 3.6% cut.

Preliminary estimates for the Flex Fund payment for FY2003 were posted March 1 on the web: <http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/0000D9D9-80000007/> under "March 1 Flex Fund Estimates." Final entitlement amounts will be about 3.6% less overall and will be finally calculated after the October 2002 enrollment count. Districts may still levy the amounts approved by voters this Spring.

State Technology Payment



Timing of the state technology payment will make it a bit difficult, *but not impossible*, for trustees to budget for the Technology Fund (28). Knowing when payment information will be available might help you plan.

The total amount of the state's technology grant is not usually available to OPI until July. The Technology Fund (28) is now a budgeted fund. Trustees must adopt a budget in order to spend using the Technology Fund.

During July, OPI will receive notice from DNRC of the total amount available for distribution to schools. As soon as possible, OPI will calculate the district

Between now and August 15, trustees must adopt a budget for the Technology Fund, along with other budgeted funds.

payment amounts, post them on the web, and notify districts by e-mail.

The Technology Fund (28) is supported with state technology ("timber") money, interest, and a limited number of other non-levy revenues. With voter approval, trustees may levy an amount each fiscal year that does not exceed 20% of the original cost of any technological equipment, including computers and computer network access. The amount budgeted over time may not exceed 150% of the original cost of the equipment. All those revenues, along with any amount of fund balance you intend to spend during the year, must be budgeted.

Remember, you can hold over any money remaining in the fund as of June 30 and budget to spend it next year. (That is, unless it is grant money that program regulations require must be spent by June 30.)

OPI will send you the information as soon as possible. **WATCH FOR THE E-MAIL!**
Contact: Bonnie Maze (406) 444-3249 or bmaze@state.mt.us.

For questions or additional information about items in this newsletter, please contact:
Joan Anderson (406) 444-1960 janderson@state.mt.us

MAEFAIRS Opening July 22

Anxious to start entering data for the FY02 Trustees' Financial Summary (TFS) and FY03 Final Budget? MAEFAIRS will be open for data entry beginning July 22. OPI will send you an e-mail message to notify you when the files are ready to download.

DO NOT ENTER DATA INTO MAEFAIRS until you receive the message that MAEFAIRS is open. Data files must be downloaded on or after July 22 and will overwrite data you entered before the system was open. Contact: Nica Carte (406) 444-4401 or ncarte@state.mt.us.

Visit the **NEW** School Finance Web Page at [http:// www.opi.state.mt.us/SchoolFinance/index.html](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/SchoolFinance/index.html)

Transportation

The following Pupil Transportation items are included in this packet:

- 1) Bus inspection forms (TR-13) for 1st Semester 2002-03;
- 2) Pre-printed Bus Route Forms (TR-1); and
- 3) 2002 School Bus Standards.

OPI recently purchased several new bus driver education and bus safety videos. Districts may borrow them, free of charge. A list will be available in early July. Call **Maxine Mougeot** at 444-3096 or e-mail to mmougeot@state.mt.us if you have questions.

Grant Cash Requests

Districts must request grant cash no later than the date the closeout reports are due. Under OPI policy, cash requests cannot be honored if submitted after the closeout deadlines of August 10 (for grants ended June 30) or November 10 (for grants ended September 30). Contact: Madilon Beatty (406) 444-4403 or mbeatty@state.mt.us.

FY 2001-02 Budget Amendments

Final budget amendments for all purposes and all funds must be adopted by June 30, 2002. Any petitions for unusual enrollment increase budget amendments were due to OPI by May 31. Final resolutions must be passed by June 30. Please remember to send a copy of the final resolution to OPI.

Finance and Tuition ARMS Adopted

Administrative Rules (ARMs) were amended through a hearing process that was completed during May. A copy of the final notice, including responses to comments on the draft rules, will be distributed soon and posted soon.

The rules, as amended, will probably be available in final form in mid-July. OPI will discuss changes during the 2002 School Budget and Accounting Workshops in July. Contact: Joan Anderson, (406) 444-1960 or janderson@state.mt.us.

2002 School Budgeting & Accounting Workshops

July 9 Kalispell July 16 Glasgow July 23 Miles City
July 10 Missoula July 17 Havre July 24 Billings
July 11 Butte July 18 Great Falls
See You There!!

New Tuition Form?

The attendance agreement form (FP-14) is being updated for SB65 changes and Administrative Rules adopted this May. It will likely not be

CORRECTION:

Traffic Ed Reimbursement for August 2002

is expected to be

\$60 - \$65

per student completing the traffic ed course, not \$70 - \$75 as it was last year.

available in time for your use this coming year. Please adjust the current form as necessary for this year.

MAEFAIRS Training will be held at OPI in Helena, July 31, 2002, 9 am to 4 pm. The session is free. Participants will complete a "hands-on" example using the MAEFAIRS system in the OPI computer training room. New MAEFAIRS users are highly encouraged to attend. To register, contact: Nica Carte, (406) 444-4401 or ncarte@state.mt.us.

HAVE A NICE SUMMER!



***FY01 Audits are Due to OPI by
June 30.***